LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

The Right to Live

R.P.D.

Soviet Arms: The Truth

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

World Youth Festival

WILLIAM GALLACHER

September, 1951

One shilling and sixpence

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CHALLENGE TO RESOURCE

FIRST reactions to the announced price rise, effective with this issue, come in as I write. It is too early to get a clear picture, except of the heart-warming feeling readers have for this Magazine of International Labour. We had headaches and heartaches in facing the fact that what one publisher calls 'the non-stop increase in the cost of production' must force the price up to 1s. 6d. It doesn't look much compared with the 'glossies', devoted to glamour and how to make your villa look like a princess's palace; but to our readers, who work for their living, it means a lot. Here's the problem. Since January, 1950, a really splendid rise in circulation, of no less than 18%, has been maintained. Will the change mean that this rise will be checked, or go into reverse? How many people may feel forced to lay aside this weapon and struggle along as best they may, a little less clear-sighted and encouraged, less well-equipped just when they need more than ever before strength to stand firm against the barrage of lies and Yankee-dictated distortions? It makes you sweat to think, doesn't it, that an extra 6d. a month might make so much difference? So I turn anxiously to these first letters, yet guarding against over-optimism, because it is our firmest friends who will write first; and of their devotion, their determination, their sane judgment of what they most need, we have no doubt. Characteristic the very first letter, from one living on a very narrow margin indeed: 'I quite understand the need for the extra bit; *Labour Monthly* will not be dear at the raised price and I shall certainly keep it going.' The keynote from old readers, who have tested its value to them over the years, is that they can't afford to do without it. 'Since first becoming acquainted with *L.M.* nearly 15 years ago I have never missed reading a number, and always the *Notes* are still eagerly read by me first of all.' The young, too. A young fellow writes that he is looking forward to the next 30 years with *L.M.*, which will still leave him with a future, 'for it was born just 18 months before me.' He describes how he won new readers in his engineering factory: 'I firmly believe that if a person has an ounce of sincerity and a grain of common sense, it is *the* journal above others to put him firmly on the path to peace and socialism.' Looking through a trade paper I analysed some 79 price rises; many were up over 50%, some up to 100% and more. One weekly went out of existence. (Incidentally, its swansong was to devote its last main article to an embittered and highly fanciful attack on our Editor; after which it died, possibly of its own bite?) A monthly which refused to put up its price from 1s. was suspended 'until conditions become economically more tolerable.' Can anyone imagine *L.M.* unprotestingly suspending until then? Ah, but the one was produced for the profit of its shareholders, depending on advertisers' support; the other for the profit of its readers, having their goodwill to depend on. The one asks: how many copies can we sell at a profit? The other: how many readers can we reach? There is more than meets the eye in this difference. It means that we can

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Notes of the Month

The Right to Live

"The Fourth Freedom is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments."

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT,
Message to Congress, January 6, 1941

With this issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY it has unfortunately been necessary to raise the price to one shilling and sixpence. This increase, which is on the same basis as other periodicals, we have sought to resist and postpone by all possible means, knowing the financial difficulties of most of our readers. But there has been no alternative, if we are to maintain the quality of the magazine. The consequence of the American-imposed rearmament drive and world inflation has made itself felt not least in the sphere of paper and printing, so that the resulting compulsory restriction of the production of serious books, pamphlets and periodicals in the Western world, and the prohibitive prices imposed, at a time when there is

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most need of information and discussion, have become in effect the Government's new Tax on Knowledge. The lavishly subsidised pro-capitalist journals, which do not depend economically on their readers, but are maintained by wealthy advertisers, have more resources to meet the new difficulties, even though many of them are also feeling the pinch. But the non-subsidised independent press, which depends entirely on its readers, is most heavily hit. We appeal to our readers for their understanding, friendship and forgiveness in the face of this painful increase, and hope they will all the more rally round to help us to meet the blow and maintain our circulation. We are anxious not to lose a single reader. Where there is special difficulty, two or three could group together. May we also suggest that the LABOUR MONTHLY should be taken by organisations (as many do already), by constituency and ward labour parties, trade union branches, co-operative guilds, clubs and discussion societies to be available for their members? Have our readers made sure that the LABOUR MONTHLY is available in the public libraries in their locality, and if not, will they immediately take active steps to ensure that it is?

After Twelve Years

Twelve years ago Britain was involved in war in Europe. The past twelve years have seen six years of war and six years of uneasy and incomplete peace. What will the coming years bring? The crazy witches' dance of rearmament culminating in its inexorable climax of renewed world war? Or the halt before the abyss; negotiation; the beginning of disarmament; and peace? This is the essential theme of the Great Debate which is now developing and extending in every quarter and at every level. No apology is needed for returning to this theme. There is no other. This theme dominates every public controversy and every economic and political problem. This theme will underlie the anxious discussions of the Trades Union Congress on our present economic discontents. This theme will overshadow, whatever official attempts may be made to stifle it, the proceedings of the Labour Party Conference in October. Never was there more need of the fullest and frankest responsible discussion of the grave choice which opens out before us. In the polemical interchanges which have been taking place there has been plentiful talk of this fundamental right and of that fundamental right, of the true meaning of each right, and of the conditions of its realisation. But in face of the war-maniacs' frenzied speculation in the weapons of multi-millioned des-

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truction, mankind is engaged in the fight for the most elementary right of all—the Right to Live.

1936 and 1951

We have reached a situation in some respects comparable to the mid-thirties, although the whole scale is now immeasurably enlarged. By 1936 a number of menacing steps had already been taken along the path of war: the Anglo-German Naval Treaty to rearm Germany and give Hitler submarines, and the remilitarisation of the Rhineland to tear down the barriers to war erected by the Versailles settlement (both measures approved by the Conservative and Labour Parties and the *Daily Herald,* with only the Communist Party correctly warning of their significance for future war); and the first military adventures of local aggressive wars in Manchuria, Abyssinia and Spain. Nevertheless the final fatal steps to world war had not yet been taken. The choice was still open. Had the positive peace policy, advocated by the Soviet Union and by a wide body of progressive opinion in the West, been adopted, war could have been prevented. War between the Great Powers was still three years off. There was still time—but not for long. There was still opportunity—but that opportunity was not taken, with results now known. Why was that opportunity not taken? Why was that obvious common-sense peace policy, which everybody to-day—everybody without exception—recognises should have been carried out, and which was actively striven for by the Soviet Union, the Communists and the International Peace Campaign, not carried out? There is no dispute of the reason. Fundamentally, the reason was the deeply embedded and suicidal anti-Soviet and anti-communist hostility of dominant circles in the West, alike of Conservative reaction and of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress right wing leadership. The price paid was the war. There is a lesson in these events for to-day.

A Parallel and a Warning

To-day, not eighteen years after the armistice, as in 1936, but six years after the armistice, a series of menacing steps have once again been taken along the path of war: the Atlantic Pact; the local wars of aggression of the Atlantic Powers in Korea, Vietnam and Malaya; the measures to rearm German and Japanese militarism and draw in Franco (the would-be sandwichman of two world wars), Greece and Turkey into the war alliance; and the reckless rearmament pro-

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grammes. But the choice is still open. The aggressive plans for a new world war, so abundantly and publicly displayed with diagrams and maps by the strategic experts in the public prints of the Atlantic Powers, with a brazen openness which would leave Hitler's *Mein Kampf* by comparison a cryptogram, are still timed for a future peak of rearmament—varyingly set by the experts for eighteen months, two years or three years from now, when the Fulton schedule has fixed the signal for a 'showdown'. This means that there is still time to change the course of events. But the time is short; for rearmament carries its own murderous logic, as Hitler's rearmament showed. Rearmament is no path to peace. Rearmament permits of no equilibrium. Rearmament spreads economic disorganisation, sharpens international tension, extends mass unrest and alarm at lowered standards and the menacing future. Unless the course is changed in time, the moment is reached when the tension touches the point of explosion: when the politicians of rearmament, even though they may subjectively believe that they desire peace, lose control of the consequences they have themselves conjured up, and, confronted with the menace of economic catastrophe and bankruptcy and rising mass protest, take the final desperate plunge to press the button which releases war; the guns they have piled up go off; amid universal protests of innocence of blame, the language of the guns replaces the language of diplomacy.

And a Difference

But there is one important difference, among many important differences, between the situation of a decade and a half ago and to-day. Then the Soviet Union was alone among the Powers in the fight for peace. To-day it is a different world. It is true that American imperialism is a far more inflated menace than German imperialism ever was, with a rearmament expenditure now running at twenty times Hitler's peak level, and with a world expansion and chain of military bases extending over every continent in a way that makes Hitler's expansion look a petty one-continent affair. It is also true that the new American Anti-Comintern Pact or Atlantic Pact extends to a wider war alliance than the old one of Hitler, Mussolini, Tojo and Franco, and seeks at the same time to draw in and resurrect the surviving remains of the old one. Nevertheless, the main shift of the balance of the world is the other way. To-day the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic are the two largest nations in the world on the side of peace, representing, together with

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the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, one third of humanity. All Asia is stirring and cannot in a single country any longer (with the doubtful exception of Turkey) be counted on for the purposes of the Anglo-American War Bloc. Western Europe is restive under American control. The World Peace Movement reaches an extent never before known. Hence, despite the putrefying and stagnant remains of the old stale Hitlerite anti-Soviet and anti-communist slogans in United States and British official expression, the climate of the world as a whole is irreversibly changed. It is a symptom of this change that, alongside the intensive war preparations, an enormous *discussion* on the basic choice of peace or war is breaking through all the barriers and obstacles and warnings erected by the leaders of the war camp against 'peace traps' and 'peace talk' and 'peace offensives'. The voice of the peoples for peace makes itself heard. This has reached in the most recent period to a developing interchange also on official levels between the representatives of the leading Powers on the choice of peace or war. This is a new and significant and potentially hopeful feature of the present world situation.

The Debate Extends

The Great Debate continues and extends. During the past weeks there has taken place a series of important official and semi-official international exchanges. First, the exchange of views of the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Malik and the Quaker Delegation on the conditions of peace. Second, the Morrison-*Pravda* interchange. Third, the Truman-Shvernik correspondence with the resolutions of the United States Congress and of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on the possibilities of peaceful relationships of the United States and the Soviet Union. In Britain the wide public controversy on rearmament, which has been brought to the forefront with the resignation of Cabinet Ministers and the publication of the ex-Ministers' pamphlet *One Way Only,* has been carried further forward by the significant new pamphlet of G. D. H. Cole on *Weakness Through Strength.* The agenda of the Trades Union Congress is entirely concentrated on the economic problems arising from rearmament. The agenda of the Labour Party Conference reveals a record array of resolutions, the majority critical of the Government, and no less than seventy-four concentrating on rearmament and foreign policy. In the sphere of practice the precariously maintained Kaesong negotiations, if they have not yet

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brought peace in Korea nearer, have at any rate exposed to public view the original aggressive aims of the war in Korea to seize and hold territory north of the 38th Parallel (territory which, according to the Chairman of the U.S. National Munitions Board, is 'of exceptional importance' to American strategic aims because 'ninety per cent of all tungsten resources outside China are situated in the area which is now in the hands of the United States armed forces to the north of the 38th Parallel'). And hundreds of young people from Britain, France and other countries, who have sought to unite with youth of ninety nations in the Berlin Festival for peace, have learned with their bodies who are the violent enemies of peaceful intercourse between the peoples.

Interim Verdict

What are the conclusions to be drawn from all these interchanges and experiences? Some general conclusions stand out. First, every concrete proposal for peace so far has come, either from the Soviet Government and People's Governments, or from unofficial opinion in the West (as from the Quaker Delegation); no concrete proposals of any kind for peace—as distinct from polemics and apologetics—have so far come from any Western Government. It is true that Herbert Morrison took the initiative in proposing the exchange of articles with *Pravda*. But he wasted the opportunity with some very commonplace, stale anti-communist polemics, of a style made familiar by Transport House for home consumption, and some banal verbal assertions of his devotion to the cause of peace, without a single concrete proposal from a British Foreign Secretary. It was *Pravda* which took the opportunity to make concrete proposals for peace: a Five Power Peace Pact, reduction of armaments, banning of the atom bomb and banning of war propaganda.

> If the Labour Government is really for the preservation of peace, why does it reject a Five Power Peace Pact? Why does it oppose a reduction of the armaments of all the Great Powers? Why does it oppose the prohibition of the atomic weapon? Why does it persecute those who champion the cause of the preservation of peace? Why does it not ban war propaganda in Britain?

Words and Deeds

Similarly President Truman took the initiative in sending to President Shvernik the Congress resolution expressing verbal devotion to the cause of peace and peaceful intercourse (which is much as if an armed Chicago gangster, after surrounding a peaceful citi-

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zen's house with guns pointed at every door and window, and mailing him daily literature to inform him how everything is ready and in position to pulverise, blow up, explode, dynamite and generally exterminate the peaceful citizen's entire household, home and assets unless the gangster's terms are accepted, were then to complain querulously 'Why don't you guys believe in my peaceful intentions? '). But once again no concrete proposal for peace was made from the American side. It was the reply of President Shvernik and the Supreme Soviet which not only brought up the very practical point of the bans imposed by the United States President and Congress on peaceful economic exchange and intercourse with the Soviet Union, but also brought up specific proposals to improve relations by such measures as 'the elimination of the discrimination towards the Soviet Union in all fields of international relationships' and 'the conclusion of a Peace Pact between the five Powers, to which other states which are striving to strengthen peace could also adhere'.

Why Fear Peace ?

The second general conclusion which stands out is that even these limited interchanges, beginnings of negotiations and partial approaches to seek the possibility of peace have aroused panic alarm in the statesmen of the Western war camp. Every approach, every suggestion is immediately denounced as a '*peace trap*' (eloquent and revealing phrase). General Marshall proclaims himself 'more shocked than he has ever been' at the swing of American public opinion to hopes of peace through the cease-fire negotiations in Korea:

> I am shocked by this let-down in the nation's defence preparations since the Korea truce talk. It is a tragic and humiliating thing that that one statement by a Russian official should have such a serious effect on our programme . . . I would like to see the American people get a little hard-boiled. (*Daily Herald*, July 28, 1951.)

Secretary of State Acheson warns against 'peace lullabies'. General Omar Bradley, U.S. Chief of Staff, proclaims in a Message to Congress on July 30:

> Peace in Korea could be a disaster.

The New York Stock Exchange, which slumped on the news of the cease-fire negotiations in Korea, rallied on the more hopeful news that the American representatives were striving to wreck the negotiations:

> Prices rose to the highest levels for three months on New York Stock

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> Exchange today . . . Market observers believed that the rally was stimulated mainly by the feeling that an early peace in Korea was now unlikely. (*Daily Telegraph*, August 3, 1951.)

President Truman in his Economic Report for the first half of 1951 pointed out that corporation profits, which were 27.8 billion dollars in the first half of 1949, and 40 billion dollars in the first half of 1950, had reached 50 billion in the first half of 1951—clear evidence of the high value of the war in Korea and rearmament. The Senate Small Business Committee revealed that 10 giant corporations had taken 40 per cent. of every dollar spent by the U.S. Government on war contracts since the Korean war began. The Chairman of the U.S. Defence Mobilisation Board, Wilson, announced at a press conference in Washington that United States industrialists now regarded the production of armaments as their main concern, and that any possibility of peace or the slightest improvement in international relations would be a threat to United States economy.

Ban on Peace

From this situation follows the third general conclusion. The Western statesmen and leaders of the war camp are now more and more thrown on the defensive in face of the rising mass protest and demand for peace. They are compelled to reveal themselves publicly as angry protagonists of the war drive denouncing the popular demand for peace. Having sought to present themselves as 'crusaders for liberty' against the 'slavery' of socialism, they are forced to reveal themselves as crusaders for a third world war in unison with the most hated enemies of freedom, the Francos and Nazis and Syngman Rhees, against the peoples of the world and against world peace. Nor is this exposure confined to the principles of political argument and political alignment. It is carried forward in the sphere of practice. Faced with the popular demand for peace, they are compelled to take forcible measures to try to stifle and defeat it, to prevent intercourse between the peoples, and especially to prevent contact between the peoples of the Imperialist world and of the free world.

Boomerang of the 'Iron Curtain'

The Goebbels-Churchill myth of the 'Iron Curtain', invented to justify the Western 'cordon sanitaire' policy of hostility to the Soviet Union, now returns back upon them like a boomerang, as the reality is revealed to their own peoples. When the World Peace Council, representing eight hundred millions, seeks to send a dele-

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gation to present their proposals for peace to the United Nations, the United States takes advantage of its physical control of the site of the United Nations (which, incidentally, has just been removed from Lake Success because the original building was required for the American rearmament programme) to refuse visas. When some of the most distinguished leaders of science and culture in the world today seek to come to Britain for a World Peace Congress, Mr. Attlee's police stops them at the ports. And when British, French, American and colonial young people seek to meet their brothers and sisters of all countries in East Berlin in the greatest world gathering of youth for friendship and peace ever known, the British, French, Belgian and West German police (worthy revival of Hitler's 'New Order' in Europe) combine with American troops with bayonets to try to stop them. The Western peoples are learning in practical experience whose is the 'Iron Curtain'.

Mr. Morrison Forgot

Mr. Morrison, in the intervals of utilising his state machinery to seek to impede young people of all countries from meeting for peace, thought fit to lecture the Soviet people on the importance of 'understanding between peoples' and 'freedom to travel' and 'freedom to speak freely with foreigners'—'we impose no restrictions'. Revelling in his freedom to occupy the columns of *Pravda* with Tory platitudes, Mr. Morrison sought to dazzle a socialist population by delivering to them his familiar lecture on the superiority of capitalist civilisation, as demonstrated in Britain and America, to a socialist country where the people have got rid of the landlords and capitalists. Out came the old, old story of the absolute 'right' of the British worker to enjoy 0.01 per cent. of the available means of publicity to air his views (within the limits set by the laws of blasphemy, sedition, libel and obstruction), provided the millionaires are equally 'free' to monopolise the remaining 99.99 per cent. of the means of publicity to fill the ears of the multitude. In short, as Tom Driberg said, a document which 'could have been drafted by a permanent civil servant at the Foreign Office' and 'signed by a Conservative or a Liberal Foreign Secretary'. It was not difficult for *Pravda* in reply to give Mr. Morrison an elementary lesson in socialism, and to remind him that he had forgotten such little details as 'freedom from exploitation'—'the basis of all other freedoms'. And the *New Statesman* had ruefully to comment: 'Unhappily *Pravda* is right'. Mr. Morrison, in his lyrical enthusiasm for capitalist 'rights', forgot, among other things, the

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subject peoples of the British Empire. He also forgot the most elementary right of all—the Right to Live, which the warmakers are engaged in endeavouring to destroy.

Mr. Morrison and the Atom Bomb

Mr. Morrison and his friends are engaged in defending their 'right' to use the atom bomb, the hydrogen bomb and other weapons of mass destruction which, their exponents proudly claim, can exterminate millions of civilian men, women and children. A little preliminary experience of the methods of mass destruction from the air has been tried out by Mr. Morrison and his friends in Korea; and the Labour Party woman who dared to report on the results has been dismissed from her job and threatened with prosecution for treason. There was a time when Mr. Morrison and his friends professed to desire the prohibition of the atom bomb and weapons of mass destruction, and alleged that only a little difference of views about inspection and control compelled them to vote against every proposal for prohibition. That subterfuge has long been abandoned, since the Soviet Union offered every facility for inspection and control for the effective fulfilment of prohibition. The argument has accordingly been shifted. It is now claimed that the demand for the prohibition of the atom bomb is a sinister plot to rob the Western Powers of their most effective weapon. Mr. Morrison and his friends have thus taken their stand as the sponsors and defenders of the atom bomb and the right to use it.

Mr. Bevan and the Atom Bomb

It is worth noting that Mr. Bevan and his friends in their pamphlet *One Way Only* have taken the same stand. Claiming that 'the whole present American strategy is founded on the possession of bases in Britain' the Bevan pamphlet continues:

> There is the strongest possible reason why Britain should clarify beyond any conceivable doubt the circumstances under which any American bomber should be allowed to leave these islands on a military and warlike mission, which would certainly bring atomic reprisals upon our own cities. It should be established beyond doubt that the British veto is absolute. The existence of these vital American bases on our territory gives us the right to play a much bolder part in shaping the strategy of the alliance than we have yet exercised. We do not, of course, suggest that the alliance should be broken.

Behind the magniloquent claim for a British 'absolute veto', that is, for consultation, the continuance of American bases in Britain is accepted; the continuance of American military occupation of

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Britain is accepted; the right to use the atom bomb and the prospective use of the atom bomb (not in reprisal, but as the prospective first use of the atom bomb) is accepted. A curious 'Left' policy which fails to come out for the prohibition of the atom bomb.

Cold Light on the Cold War

The new pamphlet of G. D. H. Cole, *Weakness Through Strength*, throws the cold light of hard economic facts, not only on the Government's rearmament programme and the present critical British economic situation, but incidentally also on the shoddy economics and politics of the Bevan pamphlet. Mr. Bevan accepts the Atlantic Pact policy of the Cold War; Mr. Bevan accepts rearmament; Mr. Bevan accepts the American War Alliance: he only demands a slight reduction in the precise figure of Britain's rearmament in order to diminish the economic hardships for Britain. Mr. Cole shows that to reduce Britain's figure of rearmament, while accepting the American policy of the Cold War and world rearmament, will not avail to save Britain from the most disastrous economic consequences:

> I am stressing the adverse effects of *world* rearmament on our national economy because I want above all else to make it clear that this is capable of being a much bigger factor in depressing our standard of living than any rearmament we undertake ourselves. Even if we did not propose to spend an additional penny on our own defence services we should still feel severely the adverse effects of rearmament by other countries, and above all by the United States, which, with their immense purchasing power and command of gold, are in a position to control the world market and to force up prices against other buyers to a practically unlimited extent.

'Stop the Cold War'

Mr. Cole points out that the existing burden on the standard of living of the British people is only a beginning of what is in store, if the present policy is continued:

> We are now spending about 10 per cent of our gross national product on armaments, as against less than 7 per cent a year ago. Two years hence we may easily be spending 15 or even 20 per cent.

He argues in relation to the question of prices, wages and profits—and this is especially important for the discussions of the Trades Union Congress—that no attempted redistribution through increased taxation of profits or price control or raising of wages

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can *alone* prevent the depression of the standard of living, *if* the policy of rearmament and the Cold War is allowed to continue:

> That is no good reason against cutting down still further the spending power of the rich; but do not let us deceive ourselves into the belief that redistribution of this kind could make any substantial difference in reducing the effects of rearmament on the standard of living of the main body of the working class.

What is the conclusion? There is only one inescapable conclusion: it is essential to 'stop the Cold War':

> If we want to avoid having our standards of living forced down we must somehow *stop the Cold War as a whole* and not merely contract out of the part we are at present committed to taking in it. We must work for an improvement in world relations, for an agreement to restrict armaments all over the world, and for a *modus vivendi* between the Communist and the non-Communist sectors of the world: without this we shall be bound to suffer a fall in our standards of living, even if we were to give up rearming ourselves.

Disclaiming any attempt to deal with foreign policy, he says cautiously of the Soviet Union:

> I do not wish in this pamphlet to embark on any discussion of foreign policy: I am trying to keep strictly to the economic facts. But it is surely evident that the peace propaganda of the Soviet Union and the support given to it are not wholly a sham, and that the Soviet peoples have an interest fully as strong as ours in halting the arms race in the interests of their standards of life.

Whatever might be usefully added to this argument, he establishes beyond question his conclusion:

> *The burden we are committed to bearing over the next three years is heavy enough; but it is nothing to what we are likely soon to be called on to bear unless we can stop the Cold War.*

Europe Stirs

The appearance of G. D. H. Cole's outspoken pamphlet is a sign of the alarm and anxiety which is rising in Britain and in all the countries of Western Europe over the harmful consequences and menacing perspectives of American policy. With increasingly open brutality the war strategy is proclaimed to use the European peoples as cannon fodder:

> **We are proposing dollars to arm men other than our own men. We are contributing dollars rather than men.**
>
> (General Marshall to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, presenting the Military Aid Programme of eight billion dollars, August 1, 1951.)

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It takes a man and a gun to fight. The United States is providing the gun, Europe the man.

(General Eisenhower, Atlantic Pact Supreme Commander, to U.S. Senators in Paris, *Reynolds News*, August 12, 1951.)

The German Rearmament Plan prepared by the Adenauer Government and now before the American authorities has been unofficially reported:

Some of the German proposals are startling. They include: (1) a German tactical air force of at least 2,000 planes, with a minimum air force personnel of 40,000; (2) German armed forces to total about 250,000; (3) eventual re-introduction of conscription and a two year period of compulsory military service . . .

The proposed armada of 2,000 German war planes is almost exactly equal numerically to the tactical air force at Hitler's disposal just before World War II (*New York Nation*, July 21, 1951).

The shift of emphasis of American strategy to regard, not only France and Italy, but also Britain as no longer politically 'reliable', and to concentrate on Franco, West German Nazism and Japanese militarism as its main 'reliable' allies and bulwarks, is becoming increasingly obvious. No wonder alarm and anti-American feeling—that is, hostility to American ruling class and military policy, not to the American people—is spreading among all the nations of Europe who fought for freedom.

Europe Resurgent

Europe will not submit. The experience of the World Youth Festival in Berlin, the valiant struggle of the delegates of the West against the barriers of repression and violence, and the triumph, has not only been a political episode and a political saga; it has constituted a political landmark of the present developing situation in Europe and the world. Its repercussions will reach far as the returned delegates spread their experience. The spurious labels and catchwords shrivel; the human realities are revealed. What a political baptism for hundreds of young people from Britain and the West, many without previous political background or experience, who came only to seek friendship and unity with the young people of other countries, and found the police barriers, the troops and bayonets, the Western 'Iron Curtain'—and on both sides of the barriers the ardent hearts of youth beating for unity, friendship, freedom and peace. The scenes of Innsbruck and Saarfelden will not be forgotten. The first American bayonets have pierced British flesh. The first American guns have clubbed British heads. A long

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warning shadow is cast over the future. But the unbroken determination of these young people, the resourcefulness and tenacity to overcome obstacles, the helpfulness of the local populations, the aiding strength of People's Democracy and the joyous voyage of the good ship Batory—all these, too, are part of the saga. The spirit of Resistance Europe lives anew. A wind of freedom is blowing again through Europe, and all the American gendarmes will not avail to check it.

R.P.D.

August 14, 1951.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY *will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.*

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THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES: THE TRUTH

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

DEFENCE Minister Shinwell and the Foreign Office might with advantage look up their Shakespeare. Here is some light shed on the subject of this article by that great student of human frailty.

Falstaff: Two, I am sure, I have paid—two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me—

Prince Henry: What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.

Falstaff: Four, Hal; I told thee four.

Poins: Ay, ay, he said four.

Falstaff: These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

Prince Henry: Seven? Why, there were but four even now.

Falstaff: In buckram.

Poins. Ay, four, in buckram suits.

Falstaff: Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

Prince Henry: Prythee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

Falstaff: Dost thou hear me, Hal?

Prince Henry: Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

Falstaff: Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

Prince Henry: So, two more already.

Falstaff: Their points being broken—

Poins: Down fell their hose.

Falstaff: Began to give me ground; but I followed me close, came in, foot and hand; and with a thought, seven of the eleven I paid.

Prince Henry: O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two!

Falstaff: But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back, and let drive at me—for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

Prince Henry: These lies are like the father that begets them—gross as a mountain, open, palpable. [Henry IV, Part One, II, iv.]

And now let us see what the British Government has discovered about the armed forces of the Soviet Union—that land of mystery and secrets, concealed behind its impenetrable Iron Curtain, 'so dark thou couldst not see thy hand'.

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July 25, 1950. Mr. Shinwell states that the Soviet *armed forces* number 2.8 million men, and its army consists of 175 divisions.

February 12, 1951. Mr. Attlee states in the House of Commons: 'Soviet Russia did not demobilise its forces at the end of the war' (when it had over 12 million men mobilised).

March 18, 1951. Mr. Strachey, War Secretary, states the Soviet Army has 175 divisions, and its strength is 'about 4 million'.

April 22, 1951. Mr. Shinwell states that the Soviet Army has 200 divisions.

July 15, 1951. War Under-Secretary Woodrow Wyatt states that the Soviet *army* has 215 divisions, comprising over 4 million men.

July 27, 1951. Mr. Shinwell states that the Soviet *armed forces* comprise 4,600,000 men: of which 3.2 million men *and women* are in the army (215 divisions).

There are several remarkable things about this series of figures, which show a rate of expansion fully equal to that of Sir John Falstaff's men in buckram.

One is that the Government has never pretended to give the slightest indication of the sources from which it draws its information or on which it bases its calculation. And if the answer is that the source is Military Intelligence—for which the British military attaché in Moscow is responsible—anyone can look up the picture of fatuous misinformation presented by the reports from that source, sent in April and May, 1938, which are reproduced in the official *Documents of British Foreign Policy* (3rd series, vol. 1). If there is anything certain, it is that Military Intelligence figures are totally unreliable when they deal with the hated U.S.S.R.

Moreover, the Government has never pretended to explain why its anonymous 'information' differs so completely from that given by Admiral Kirk, the American Ambassador in Moscow, to the Central European Editor of *U.S. News and World Report*, and published by that journal on December 15, 1950:

> Admiral Kirk detects none of the tell-tale signs of war that experts watch for. For example: Soviet Army units are remaining at peacetime strength. No overage classes are being called up. No extraordinary movements of troops or supplies have been detected. There is no drive in Russia to build bomb shelters, or restrict civilian consumption of critical materials. There is no shifting of labour away from peacetime to wartime industries.

We shall see later that the last two sentences are an understatement: civilian consumption and peacetime industries are rapidly expanding.

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The second feature is that the final 'peak' figure of July 27 was followed by an official handout designed to show that, while this terrifying increase of Soviet armed forces was going on, Britain's 'armed manpower' was declining from 850,000 in June, 1948, to 690,000 in June, 1950. In reality, these figures—taken from the official *Monthly Digest of Statistics* for May, 1951—refer only to 'manpower in Great Britain,' *i.e.*, they exclude those abroad.

Now what is the real significance of these figures for comparison with the U.S.S.R.? Merely this: that they represent armed forces maintained out of the British population of roughly 50 millions. For a population of 200 millions—that of the U.S.S.R.—the corresponding figure would be 3,400,000 in June, 1948, and (say) 2,760,000 in June, 1950! Perhaps the reader will now realise why Shinwell's figure of July, 1950 (2,800,000 men),—repeated as late as November, 1950, in the Labour Party's 'Handbook'—had to shoot-up sooner or later. For otherwise it would have become apparent that, on those figures, total Soviet forces were no larger than those in Great Britain, apart from British troops elsewhere. The first attempt—rightly characterised by Stalin as 'a slander against the Soviet Union' (*Pravda* interview, February 17, 1951)—was Attlee's idiotic statement on February 12, quoted above: which he has never had the grace to withdraw, although the Soviet Government, in its Note of February 24 which not a single capitalist newspaper (including the *Daily Herald*) dared to publish, pointed out that it had demobilised 33 age groups. So Mr. Strachey came to the rescue—and the same 175 divisions which previously stood for 2,800,000 men now had to swell to over 4 millions!

Incidentally, a glance at the map would show that the U.S.S.R. has a boundary stretching for 40,000 miles. Its back door may be defended by China: but sea invasion is possible both from the Baltic and the North Pacific (as history has shown). It has therefore to reckon with a vulnerable frontier at least five times the length of Britain's total of 4,800 miles—this quite apart from the modern opportunities of airborne invasion over otherwise inaccessible northern coasts. The comparison with the U.S.A. is even more striking: the American frontiers are protected by thousands of miles of sea on either side, while the American armed forces, getting on for 3 millions out of a total population of just over 140 millions, are proportionately 50 per cent larger than those of the U.S.S.R.

Moreover, there is an inherent absurdity in the propaganda

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figures about 'four million men in the Soviet forces'. They defy all the observed and tested facts about Soviet life: and whichever way you look at those facts the answer is the same. Earlier we saw what the American Ambassador had to say about peacetime industries and civilian consumption. If we turn to the League of Nations' *Armaments Year Book* for 1939-40 (again no pro-Soviet source) we find (p. 348) that—on the basis of Soviet official statements—the Soviet armed forces in March, 1939, numbered 1,900,000. At that time, according to another League of Nations publication (Frank Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union,* 1946, p. 221), the number of Soviet wage-earners was 28.5 millions. Today their numbers have *risen* to 39.2 millions (*Report on Fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan,* 1951, p. 17) in spite of the terrible losses of life suffered by the U.S.S.R. during the war (seven millions done to death by the Germans, and probably double that number of deaths from war privations and decline in births.) Yet we are expected to believe that the numbers *withdrawn* from production for service in the armed forces are more than double what they were at the beginning of 1939!

But even more striking is the evidence of six successive British representative working-class delegations during the last 18 months. These were not composed of picked sympathisers with the U.S.S.R.: the overwhelming majority, elected in the large factories and trade unions, were members of the Labour and Co-operative Parties or of no party. Their evidence tallies precisely with that of Ambassador Kirk—for example, *Russia With Our Own Eyes* (1950, 9d.), *Russia Wants Peace With Britain* (December, 1950, 1d.), *Russia—The Truth* (1951, 1s.), all published by the British-Soviet Friendship Society. A brilliant general account was given by D. N. Pritt, K.C., in his *Truth About The U.S.S.R.* (*Labour Monthly,* 6d.). Unanimously they reported abundant food, no rations, rising standards of life and comfort, falling prices, a sense of confidence and happiness in work.

These unanimous findings have their support in the dry language of statistics too. In 1948, the first post-war year in which pre-war industrial output was exceeded, Soviet living standards measured in sales of consumer goods began to rise rapidly. In 1949 sales of every kind of consumer wares went up 25-50 per cent: the following year by another 20-50% (*Soviet News* reports on the 1949 and 1950 Plans, 1d. each). A characteristic example: sales of gramophones

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and cameras had already risen, in 1950, by 45% and 40% respectively compared with 1949. Last quarter (April-June, 1951) the quantities sold were 46% and 65% respectively larger than in the same quarter of 1950.

Can we show anything similar? And can we show anything like the giant power, irrigation and afforestation schemes which the U.S.S.R. has under way—schemes which must increase the Soviet output of electric power by 25 per cent, and the output of grain, meat, dairy produce, fruit and vegetables *per head* by 50 per cent, in a few years' time? Or the frightful war damage made good?

Stalin has already pointed out, in his famous reply to Attlee last February, that rising standards, falling prices and vast new productive undertakings are quite impossible when armies and armaments are being expanded. But then Stalin's economic science is that of the exploded Karl Marx, whereas Attlee's is that of the London School of Economics—always most clear-sighted after the event. That, no doubt, explains why, after Stalin's withering reply, Mr. Attlee's young men began reluctantly admitting that 'we cannot carry through our defence programme without giving up something' (Gaitskell, April 10, 1951) and 'in some respects standards may be reduced. They will be.' (Shawcross, June 9, 1951). Every British housewife knows that they *are* being reduced—just as every Soviet housewife knows that her family's standards are rising. The Quaker Delegation recently in the U.S.S.R. noticed that too. And the figures produced by Messrs. Shinwell, Strachey, Woodrow Wyatt and Attlee are like Falstaff's men in buckram—fantasies intended to distract attention from the trials and privations which are being inflicted on the British people.

How large are the Soviet forces in reality? Ambassador Kirk's testimony about 'peacetime strength' stands. The Soviet Note of February 24 was precise:

> At present the numerical strength of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, counting the ground forces, air force and navy, is equal to the numerical strength of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

The numerical strength of the armed forces of the United States, Britain and France, calculated on the same basis, was (it noted) 'more than five million men'—in February—which was 'more than twice as great as the numerical strength of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. at present.'

What was the numerical strength of the Soviet forces in 1939? At

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the beginning of that year, as we have seen, it was 1,900,000. At the beginning of September some 500,000 were recalled from the reserve. Allowing for wastage due to sickness and losses in resisting Japanese aggression in Mongolia, we arrive at a maximum of 2,300,000. And for once—no doubt through some oversight in the flurry of the moment—an American spokesman in Washington blurted out his acceptance of the facts on February 17, when Stalin's statement came through. The total of forces under arms in the U.S.S.R., he said, was 'about the level of 1939' : and he put this figure at 2,300,000.

We repeat that this maximum figure is not only far less *in absolute figures* than that of the three Powers which have ganged up against the U.S.S.R., but also *proportionately* far less than any of them have raised. Nor is it without significance that the United Nations themselves, in their *Economic Survey of Europe* published at the end of May, 1951, reprinted (Chapter 5) a table bearing this out, in terms of 'the number of man-years of industrial labour in each country that the defence expenditure of that country would buy.' The statisticians of UNO, sifted continually by the snooping and smearing of the American F.B.I., are not pro-Soviet: nor are they likely to have over-estimated the year's earnings of a Soviet workingman. Yet they showed Britain's expenditure in 1951 as 82 man-years per thousand inhabitants, U.S. expenditure as 74 man-years, French as 51 and Soviet as 49!

One last point needs to be mentioned. The U.S.S.R. has never been satisfied at having to spend so much on defence since the war—22 per cent of its budget in 1946, falling gradually to 17 per cent in 1948 and then slowly rising to 21 per cent this year (only two-thirds of 1940, the last pre-war year for the U.S.S.R., and far less than the proportions of British, American and French expenditure on war preparations). Hence it was that the U.S.S.R. submitted to the Security Council, on February 8, 1949, a disarmament scheme summing up a number of its previous partial proposals, as follows:

1. Reduction of armaments and armed forces of the five Great Powers, 'as a first step', by one-third in 12 months—the plan to be submitted within three months. This would have struck at 90 per cent of the world's arms.
2. Conventions (i) on prohibition of atomic weapons, (ii) on atomic energy control, to be submitted at the same time—'both conventions to be concluded and to go into effect simultaneously'. (This answered the rubbish about the U.S.S.R. 'not wanting international control'.)

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3. The agreements on atomic weapons to be part of the plan for reducing the armaments of the Big Five. This meant that one would not go into effect without the other.
4. An international control body to be established under the Security Council to supervise the fulfilment of the plan and the two conventions. The Soviet Government made it clear that this body (i) would be independent in its discussions, taking decisions by majority vote *without a veto*, (ii) could make both regular periodic inspections *and at whatever other times it considered necessary*, (iii) could inspect everywhere, including the U.S.S.R.
5. The Big Five to submit full data on their armed forces and armaments, including atomic weapons, within three months. Thus no conventions or plans would be concluded without full knowledge on all sides of what each party possessed.

This scheme was rejected by the British, U.S. and French Governments. It is noteworthy, in particular, that they refused to accept the atom bomb proposals because they had secured a nominal majority for the 'Baruch Plan'—a scheme which would transfer *ownership* of atomic plant and resources in all countries to an international commission, and thus would have put the Socialist economy of the U.S.S.R. under the control of a capitalist majority! Seeing that the British Government later refused to put even its coal and iron resources under similar international control—the 'Schuman Plan'—it is obvious that Attlee and Bevin could only have proposed the 'Baruch Plan' to the U.S.S.R. with their tongue in their cheek, knowing perfectly well that it could not be accepted: and that in fact they were rejecting the only practicable plan for banning the hellish weapon of the atom bomb.

But the U.S.S.R. has not been daunted. It has gone on pressing for disarmament, and for a peace pact between the five Great Powers which would ensure that disarmament would begin to be effective.

It is time the Labour Government stopped its twentieth century imitations of Sir John Falstaff and made a serious and worthy gesture for peace in response to the offers of the U.S.S.R.—offers which answer the need of the British people no less than that of the American and all other peoples, menaced by a new world slaughter and world obliteration.

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WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL

W. GALLACHER

FROM Warsaw I arrived in Berlin on Sunday, August 5, just in time for the opening of the 3rd World Youth Festival. It was a spectacle I wouldn't have missed for anything in the world. From all lands they came. Buoyant youth. Life and vigour expressed in their free and easy grace as they came marching with banners waving around the great new Walter Ulbricht Stadium. Only 65 British delegates, out of 1,640 due to arrive, got there for the start; but finally, before the end, 1,628 had got past all the obstacles. Out of these 65, no less than 250 according to a report from the other side, crossed over to West Berlin, but they still left 65 to carry on. It's a peculiar mathematical problem which I am sending on to Einstein for his consideration. But there they came, the 65 *Anglias* right at the front according to the alphabetical arrangement. Then down the runway into the arena came the others, tens of thousands of them. What a magnificent delegation was there from the mighty Soviet Union, from Liberated China. Listen to the cheers and the handclapping. But then an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm—yes, it is the heroic Koreans. A special reception for them and for the delegates from Viet-Nam. And then look at the Czechoslovakians, the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Rumanians and Albanians. All young people growing up free from capitalist exploitation. Jubilant happy youth. I wanted to be down among them.

From far Australia 100 delegates—grand they were as are the dockers of Australia, who sent a cable to the Yanks at Innsbruck that if they didn't withdraw the ban on the delegates they'd black every Yankee ship. And what a story our lads will have to tell about Innsbruck. How thrilled I was to meet those who had broken through, several of them children from the Glasgow Socialist Sunday School. One boy of 14 held up by the bayonets of Yankee fascists received a telegram from his father and mother—'Remain and fight it out.' Alan Bush, when I commented, 'You have had a tough time,' answered, 'Yes; but I wouldn't have missed a day of it.' That's the spirit that can never be conquered. But what a commentary Innsbruck was on Morrison's puerile piffle in *Pravda*.

From the Near East, the Far East, from Africa, from the Americas, from France, Sweden and Finland as from elsewhere they were there with flags and banners and heart-thrilling slogans of

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Friendship and Peace. But surely greatest of all was to see the striking march of the triumphant lads and lasses of the People's Republic of Germany and there close beside them, cheered by the seventy thousand spectators, the equally triumphant Polish youth. Stalin, Pieck, Bierut: time and again these names were cheered to a volley of hand-clapping. Others got their turn, including our own Harry Pollitt, but these three represented a powerful combination for Friendship and Peace of the nations that had suffered most heavily from the war. After marching round the arena, the contingents fell into their allotted places on the field. There they presented a picture of colour and beauty that only an exceptional master of the art of writing could properly describe. When all were in place the Flag of Peace was hoisted—flying high and there flying higher one thousand doves over the arena and away into the far places of the earth. Well might Joseph Grohman, President of the International Students, proudly proclaim that the Third World Festival had more countries and larger delegations by far than either of its predecessors. The forces of peace were everywhere growing. The young people want to live, to live and to build a new and better world—they are not going to be led into a mad orgy of Yankee destruction. The President of the People's Democratic Republic, Wilhelm Pieck, then gave the youth a welcome—a really hearty welcome in his own name and in the name of the Government. What a change that represented from the days of the bestial Nazi thugs of German Monopoly Capitalism. 'Friendship and Peace,' the President proclaimed. 'Friendship and Peace' and 'Long Live Wilhelm Pieck' was the mighty response of the World Gathering of Youth. Everywhere you hear it. Everywhere you see it 'Friendship and Peace.' Nothing 'phoney,' nothing sham about it, but the heart's desire of all these fine young people who see before them a bright new life in the building of a bright new world where the exploitation of man by man will be known no more. Long live the World Youth Festival and the fight for Friendship and Peace.

In view of the ever-increasing demand for old volumes, single back numbers are most welcome. Of recent issues, June and October, 1948; April, 1949; and January, 1951, are still urgently needed.

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REARMAMENTS' BITTER FRUITS

J. R. CAMPBELL

THE working class is already tasting the bitter fruits of the rearmament drive and does not like them. So the agenda of the forthcoming Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference will be dominated by many resolutions of protest.

Since the last Trades Union Congress the retail price index (which no one believes is a sufficiently serious index of the actual rise in prices) will show an advance of at least 11 per cent. This is the greatest increase in prices in any single year since the war year 1940. Wage rates will probably have advanced by about 8 per cent in the same period, but account has to be taken of the fact that output per worker is 5 per cent above the level of last year. The disparity between the retail price index and the index of wage rates is greater than at any period since June 1947 when both indices came into operation. At the last Trades Union Congress, for example, the index of male wage rates stood at 110, while that of retail prices stood at 114—a disparity of 4 points. This year the index of wage rates will be 119 while the price index will be 127—a gap of 8 points. The gap would be still wider had last year's Congress not scrapped the wage freeze policy and commenced a vigorous offensive for increased wages. The situation is worse when you take the trend over a period. Since 1947 the output per head of the workers in all industries has increased by 33 per cent, while wage rates have fallen behind the rise in retail prices—in other words, real wages have fallen in a period when there has been the most remarkable increase in the productivity of the workers. Social service benefits have suffered most by the rise in prices. Since 1946 when all the present benefits were fixed the cost of living has increased by at least 34 per cent. All social service benefits have remained at the 1946 level except old age pensions, and even there the recent increases do not restore the pensions to the 1946 level in purchasing power. This is the greatest social service cut in our recent history and it has passed virtually unnoticed up till recently.

So there has been the greatest protest amongst the Divisional Labour Parties that has taken place in recent years. 134 of them have placed resolutions on the agenda asking the Government to do something about prices. In some of these resolutions there is, of

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course, the suggestion that this is a matter which can be dealt with in isolation. No less than 37 parties however declare that the rearmament programme should be modified, because of its adverse social effects, while an equal number want the Government to change its foreign policy or to take the initiative for peace. Many other questions are dealt with on the agenda but it is clear that the affiliated bodies of the Labour Party agree on the outstanding issues of the period which are in their opinion (1) the rising cost of living and its effect on the working class standards, (2) the rearmament programme, and (3) the need for a genuine peace effort on the part of the Government. The agenda of the Trades Union Congress tells a similar story. The largest group of resolutions, 16 in number, deals with wages, prices and profits, and the next largest group, 7 in number, deals with the question of peace.

There can be no question that if the resolutions before these two great working class assemblies were discussed on their merits a group of resolutions would be adopted which would add up to a demand for drastic change of Government policy. The Right-Wing in control of the Labour Party machine will consequently seek to ensure that no resolution is discussed on its merits and that every group of resolutions is discussed as if it were a vote of no confidence in the Government and in the Party Executive. Delegates will be told that they must vote with the full knowledge that it is dangerous for the party conference to disagree with the Executive and with the Government when there is a General Election in the offing. The Executive will present a long policy statement dealing with what it considers to be the vital issues of the day. The resolutions from affiliated bodies will then be combined as amendments to the Executive's policy report. There is therefore no vote on the merits of a resolution. Each vote will be a vote of confidence or no confidence in the Executive. There is no need, of course, to be oppressed by this. The Executive can be defeated at a Labour Party Conference. I only point out that the scales will be weighted on the side of the Executive to begin with. Further, the Executive will make apparent concessions to the views of the affiliated organisations. The Government has already agreed to dividend limitation of a feeble character. The Executive will probably sponsor some comparatively innocuous measure like a capital gains tax, or a tax like Sir Stafford Cripps' Special Contribution of 1948, the abolition of Retail Price Maintenance, action to reduce distribution costs wherever they can be shown to be excessive and a general denunciation of monopolies.

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Some of those things would be mildly beneficial in normal times but none of them can have the slightest effect on a rise in prices which is caused by the war drive, which is going on throughout the capitalist world. In addition some of the most formidable critics who are members of the Executive will be silenced at the Labour Party Conference on the ground of 'collective responsibility'.

The 'arguments' which the Right-Wing will play with have already been outlined by Mr. Gaitskell in his speech in the House of Commons on July 26. These may be summarised as:—

(1) It is true that profit margins are often fixed at a level which enables efficient firms to make exorbitant profits. If they were lowered, however, less efficient firms would have to go out of business. This would intensify the goods shortage which is already serious enough; (2) increase of subsidies would mean a truly enormous increase in income tax. This we cannot afford. A small subsidy which might prevent prices rising as high as they otherwise would could be afforded if only the workers will refrain from asking for wage increases, and (3) British rearmament has had comparatively little effect on prices. Even if Britain had not engaged in the war drive prices would still be rising because of the war drive of other states.

The latter argument has one slight grain of truth in it. The main cause of the world-wide rise is the capitalist world's arms drive leading to the scramble of all capitalist powers for food and raw materials. That does not mean that the British Government has no responsibility for this, for it fully approves and participates in all the measures taken. The true conclusion to be drawn from Mr. Gaitskell's argument is not that the British people is helpless in the face of rising prices as he suggests. It is that any effective fight against rising prices must include a fight for peace and the ending of the arms drive. Two extremes must be avoided. The one is that the British people can do nothing about rising prices until the arms drive is ended. This standpoint is not likely to have many supporters at either the Trades Union Congress or the Labour Party Conference. The other extreme that you can effectively lower prices by various control measures, while retaining the arms drive in all its fury, is unfortunately still held by many people. The truth is the fight for peace and the fight against the creeping impoverishment that results from the war drive are one fight.

Gaitskell performs a rather unscrupulous trick when he declares that an increase of income tax from 3s. to 4s. in the £ would have

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been necessary in order to give sufficient subsidies to keep the cost of living from rising last year. The real situation is that, *given the enormous increase in military expenditure,* these are the increases in the income tax which would have been necessary to keep the cost of living stable. If, however, there had not been the enormous increase in arms expenditure laid down in the budget then the resources for subsidies could have been found without the enormous increase in income tax with which Gaitskell has sought to frighten the movement. In any case, even if it could be shown that it was impossible to increase subsidies on *all* goods, that would not be an argument against subsidising *some* goods. Those organisations which at the T.U.C. and the Labour Party Conference are asking for an increase in subsidies are on to a perfectly sound idea. It must, however, be increased subsidies without strings. The workers must not call off their wage movements in return for an increase of subsidies. Both are vital if the standard of life is to be preserved.

We must give the efficient capitalist firms a larger profit margin than is necessary, otherwise the less efficient will have a lower profit margin than is necessary and will go out of business. That is Gaitskell's argument against the resolutions which demand that the Government reduce the profit margins on controlled goods. His nonsensical proposition should be rejected. We venture to predict that many of the firms which are threatening to close down if the profit margin were reduced will not do so if their bluff is called. If a few actually close down and it is impossible to transfer their workers to firms in the same line in the neighbourhood, then the State should requisition them and carry on production. It is absurd, however, to justify exorbitant profit margins on the ground that some marginal firms must be kept in business.

The central issue at both conferences is to get firm decisions in favour of the British Government taking the initiative on peace and proceeding to reduce arms expenditure. Delegates will be deeply divided in their views as to the causes of existing world tension. The Right-wing will seek to play upon this fact by suggesting that resolutions calling for the British Government to support the opening of negotiations and discussions are tantamount to a vote of no confidence in the Government's conduct of foreign policy. If they can switch the debate away from what the Government ought to do now to promote peace, into a discussion on all its past foreign policy, the Right-wing leaders believe they can confuse the issue and get a vote in favour of no change. Delegates should therefore

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be clear that, if the arms race goes on unchecked, the international situation will grow worse and the economic difficulties with which they are now battling, will grow immeasurably more menacing. Next, it is important to understand that price controls are not enough. There must be an increase in wages and in social service benefits, otherwise the movement will be accepting the cuts which have already taken place. During the period when the Unions were accepting the policy of wage freeze the Right-Wing leaders constantly put forward a policy of price reduction as an alternative to a policy of wage increases. Nevertheless, price increases took place and the standard of life of the workers fell. Delegates should therefore reject any revamped-up version of this discredited policy.

Further, they must remember that the prices of controlled goods have been rising quite steadily. Therefore the type of price control is of the utmost importance. It must include a substantial increase in the subsidies of the most essential goods and a drastic reduction of the permitted profit margins on controlled goods. Anything less than this is mere deceptive window dressing.

On all these points delegates should stand firm resisting all pressure and sophistry. Their resolutions show an increasing understanding that the consequences of the present policy mean the destruction of the Labour movement and of the independence of the British people. They should therefore allow nothing to deter them from insisting on a root and branch change of policy.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

AFTER THE BETRAYAL OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

It is unfortunate that the discovery of a past traitor must always reveal a future enemy. When the General Council betrayed the miners, its members had perforce to prevent the miners from winning in order to secure justification in the eyes of their own men. There being no neutrality in the Class Struggle the traitors were bound to turn assassins of their previous allies in their own defence. Having made prophecies of a miners' defeat, they must now assist events to prove that they were right.

From *Another Stage in the Miners' Struggle*, by Arthur Horner, Sept., 1926.

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UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF WILLIAM MORRIS

Introduced by

R. PAGE ARNOT

(*Continued from July issue*)

SHORTLY after the last letter Morris produced on October 15, 1887, his Socialist play 'The Tables Turned' or 'Nupkins Awakened', for the benefit of *Commonweal*. It was performed in the Socialist League headquarters in Farringdon Road, near the present premises of the *Daily Worker* in William Rust House. Morris himself took the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a purse-proud and wooden-faced prelate. Bernard Shaw, who attended as a dramatic critic, witnessed it with delight and proclaimed Morris to be in the front rank of European playwrights. John Turner, founder of the Shop Assistants' Union (now merged in the Union of Distributive and Allied Workers) and for several years on the Trades Union Congress General Council from its formation in 1921, told me he had played a minor part in the performance. Like many actors of minor parts he remembered more than anything else the strong language used by the producer at the rehearsals and how fiercely Morris stamped and shouted when things went wrong. A. A. Purcell, who as Chairman of the Trades Union Congress in 1924 headed an official delegation (of which the same John Turner was a member) to the Soviet Union, also had vivid and somewhat similar recollections of the master-craftsman ('none better' he said) for whom he had worked at Merton Abbey. But, he said, he would never forget

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the day when Morris in a rage at bad workmanship threw the offender into a dyeing vat from which he emerged ' a Green Man '.

The great event, however, of the early winter of 1887 was 'Bloody Sunday' in Trafalgar Square on November 13: and to this in these letters Morris several times makes reference. For some weeks before that there had been a growing agitation on two issues, the coercion in Ireland on which the Metropolitan Radical Association were making public protest, and the death sentences passed in Chicago on working-class agitators accused of incitement and violence. On this the Socialist League had supported the following resolution, ' adopted at a meeting in South Place Chapel on October 14, organised by Radical and Socialist bodies ':

> That the English workers in this meeting desire earnestly to urge on their fellow workers in America the great danger to public liberty that arises from suffering citizens to be punished for resisting attempts to suppress the rights of public meeting and free speech, since a right that the people are punished for enforcing is evidently thereby made no right at all, but a crime. That the fate of the seven men now under sentence of death for holding a public meeting in Chicago, at which certain policemen were killed for attempting forcibly to disperse the people and silence the speakers, is of deep concern to us as English workers, because their case is the case of Ireland today, and is likely to be ours tomorrow unless the workers from both sides of the Atlantic declare with one voice that all who interfere with the rights of public meeting act unlawfully and at their own peril. We cannot admit that the political views of the seven condemned men have anything to do with the principle involved; and we protest against their sentence, which, if carried out, will practically make the holding of meetings by working men in their own interests a capital offence throughout the United States of America, since it is always possible for the authorities to provoke a crowd to reprisals involving danger to life. We look to our American comrades, of all shades of political opinion, to demand the unconditional release of the seven men in whose persons the liberties of all workers are now in peril.

At this point the Chief Commissioner of Police, Sir Charles Warren, had suddenly placed a ban on meetings in Trafalgar Square. Partly on the right of free speech and partly on the burning questions aforesaid, processions led by William Morris, John Burns, R. B. Cunninghame Graham and others marched to Trafalgar Square on Sunday, November 13, 1887: and meantime the news had come that on the Friday the death sentences had been carried out in Chicago. In those days, however, it would be unlikely that any pressure from the United States Embassy could be the originating cause of suppression or brutality here.

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On that 'bloody Sunday', writes May Morris, onlookers saw 'the extraordinary sight of citizens of London chased and driven by bodies of mounted police and squadrons of glittering Life Guards who charged round and round the Square scattering all who happened to be in their way'. The scene was described and commented upon by Morris in the next week's *Commonweal* and by many others at the time and since. In the annual report of the Socialist League to its Conference six months later it is briefly related, and the statement is made:

> Two working men—Linnell and Curwen—met their death through the action of the police. The funerals of both these were attended by members of the Executive. The funeral of Linnell was made the occasion of probably the largest public demonstration ever held in London.

Morris spoke at Alfred Linnell's grave on December 18: and wrote for that day the famous Death Song. Three weeks later Morris wrote the following letter in which, after lecture arrangements and remarks on provincial organiser Mahon, he speaks of the League being in an eddy after the turbulence of the previous weeks.

January 9, 1888.

My dear Glasse,

Many thanks for your letter and kind wishes which I reciprocate. As for my lecture for you, you may reckon on it, but I can give you no date just at present.

I intend to avail myself of my journey North to try a more extended lecture-tour in the N. generally: am prepared to spend a fortnight on it. This comes of a suggestion made to me that if I put myself into the hands of an agent he could arrange *paying* lectures for me in some places without which indeed I could not afford to do it. Of course I shall not make any charge to you or the Glasgow brethren. The time of this tour would depend a good deal on what you two sets of people thought the best time for up there: so you might write to Glasier and see what they think.

As to Mahon, I like him also, and when I last saw him had no doubt of his sincerity: but I think as I always thought that as things are the career of a professional agitator is not good for him, and I am afraid that he will do nothing else now. Also somehow he has (though a good natured fellow enough) a fatal gift of breeding squabbles, I scarcely know how. I suppose you know that the Glasgow chaps fairly quarrelled with him; of course I don't know all the story, but judge from a moderate account of it that I have had that he, knowing the turn of mind of our friends there unnecessarily irritated them. When he was up in London he used to have 'ideas' from time to time, which always ended in a quarrel. However he is still very young and if, as I hope, he is really 'straight' he will no doubt better.

We are rather in an eddy here as far as the League is concerned; but I am

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not at all discouraged; for I think we can yet give a lift to it as an organisation; and, which is of more importance the general feeling is gaining ground much. The recent high handedness of the Government will do us good with the Radicals; and indeed it is coming to this that there is little difference between the ordinary uneducated Socialist and the Radical. This may be rather a slur on our followers, but it cannot be helped, and is after all the natural lines for the general movement in this country. Our own branch here is doing very well—which means simply that there are half a dozen energetic and painstaking men in it. Don't forget to do what you can for *Commonweal* up there. These winter months slacken off our sale and we are getting very hard up: and I suppose your sale falls off too.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The editor's anxiety about *Commonweal* was warranted. In the 52 weeks to May, 1888, there were printed 163,500 copies, of which 152,186 were sold. There was a 'gross loss' of about £270 which was partly met by donations of £188, leaving a net loss of a little over eighty pounds.

Meantime, arising from Trafalgar Square a new organisation, the Law and Liberty League, was formed, consisting chiefly of Radical and Socialist bodies. 'Your executive took no inconsiderable part in its formation and elected delegates, one of which (W. Morris) is a member of its executive', says the Report to the League's 4th Annual Conference. This, as well as a vexatious libel action (which, however, came to nothing), is touched on in the next letter.

February 10, 1888.

My dear Glasse,

Thanks for your note: I am trying to get the Glasgow people to get an invitation to me to give a lecture on art there, so that I may get part of my expenses paid; could the same thing be done in Edinburgh do you think? I should go down with a better conscience if I felt that the bourgeois were paying for my journey.

I may as well tell you that I am in somewhat of a mess. I am to have an action for libel brought against me for that article in the C. by one Reuss who is mentioned there and who was once a member of the S.L. I have no doubt myself of my facts, but proving them in a law Court is a different thing, and it will in any case bleed me seriously: hence my wish to spend as little as I can help on my northern tour.

Also as I am not sure when the case is to come on my dates *may* be interfered with. However I had better make them in spite of all that.

I am glad to hear that you have been doing well on the whole; the opinions are spreading fast, but for my part I can see nothing to be done *but* spread-

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ing the opinions: what we want is more intelligent men who can talk and argue on the matter.

This opening of Parliament is very discouraging to those who think much can be done at once. I really think that the Tories are firmer in their seat than I supposed even, some time ago. However there is no reason for discouragement for those who have always thought that the acceptance of the principles must be the first step: only the queer spasmodic action into which we are forced is very harassing to a quiet man like myself.

I suppose you saw that I am on the executive of the L.L.L. and in close alliance with Mrs. Besant and Stead. In short I have little life now outside the movement—which is as it should be.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

P.S.—I think I had better settle for March: some time after the 15th.

Burns and Cunninghame Graham were sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for their share in Trafalgar Square ('unlawful assembly') and on February 20, 1888, the Law and Liberty League celebrated their release with a meeting in Seymour Place Riding School. Michael Davitt was in the chair and among the speakers, including William O'Brien, W. T. Stead and Mrs. Besant, was also to have been Morris. But an 'injudicious' speech by Hyndman brought an abrupt ending to the meeting, which was, says Morris, 'very variously composed of Irish, Radicals and Socialists'. To this meeting Morris refers:

February 20, 1888.

My dear Glasse,

Thank you for your note. I leave it entirely in your hands to make any arrangements you think favourable for me: All I want is to be as little out of pocket as possible by the northern journey.

Will you kindly communicate with the Glasgow friends. I am now prepared to come on any date after the 20th March. I put it off till then because of the Commune Celebration in which this year we are going to join with the S.D.F. so I would not like to be absent, as that might be put down to hostility.

Events are rather stirring here again: our meeting of tonight is an important one since William O'Brien is coming; as it brings up London coercion into line with Irish. The Radicals too will be in good heart after the successes at Southwark and Edinburgh, and I think we shall make a mark.

Thanks for the Arbroath correspondence. I should think that such letters would do much good.

By the way, I have promised Mr. Forrest to lecture at Kilmarnock. Also I want to see an old friend now house-fast near Girvan in Ayrshire. These

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two visits must be taken into consideration by you and the Glasgow 'bodies'.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

After a note on February 28 on the date of his visit to Scotland ('I have not heard from the Glasgow folk yet') another on March 2 ('No letter from Glasgow yet') ends with the words

> I think I might make Trafalgar Square the subject for the lecture at Edinburgh. I notice that out of London people are quite ignorant of the subject.

Then, after a postcard of March 14 on dates and trains, he writes:

March 17, 1888.

My dear Glasse,

I will go wherever I can be of use during my stay: only I have a letter from Glasier today asking me to make one at a gathering at Glasgow of Glasgow and Edinburgh friends which of course I should be glad to do if it can be managed, as I think a talk might be of service. Will you settle all this with Glasier and I shall be quite pleased with whatever you settle. As to the lectures I thought of giving: here they are. Art and Industry in the 14th Century (Glasgow) (only good for Glasgow or Edinburgh); Society of the future much the same. 3 Monopoly suitable anywhere; 4 What Socialists want, very elementary; 5 Socialism, an old old lecture, but would do where new to audience. 6 Socialism its end and methods: didn't I give this last year in Edinburgh? wants a rather advanced audience. I could also give half-hour's talk on Trafalgar Sq. and free speech, though I have no lecture.

Thanks for your invitation. I shall be very glad to see you—if I get to Edinburgh or indeed to Scotland at all. Whereof there seems some doubt in these snowy days: I look on it as quite an adventure putting myself on board a train. However I shall get there somehow I suppose.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

Eighteen months elapse before the next letter. Just in this interval there were big developments both at home and abroad. Morris attended the Marxist Congress in Paris out of which came the decision to set the First of May as the workers' day in every country. At home also the ' new unionism ' had taken root, and the whole working class movement was taking strides forward. In May, 1889, Gas Workers' Unions headed by Will Thorne came into being and won a strike in August. In August began the famous strike of the London Docks, led by John Burns, Tom Mann, Ben Tillett. In both of these Marx's daughter Eleanor was active. Morris realised its importance immediately (' the real point of the strike is the sense of

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combination which it is giving to the men'): and in the following letter the question comes up, along with a reference to the struggle of the 'new unionists' against the old Lib.-Labs. in the Trades Union Congress.

September 9, 1889.

My dear Glasse,

By all means use me as much as you can: I would not have thought of going to the Art Congress unless I had hoped to have been some use to our Scotch Comrades. I have a good lecture called the Origins of Ornamental Art which has a Socialist sting in his tail. I don't think I have delivered it at Edinburgh: I will give you that, and trust to impromptu (I am pretty good at it now) for my Socialist lecture if there is time for it. I hear that my Art Congress duties will not take more than three days, including a lecture 'to the workmen' in the evening on some art-technical subject, e.g., dyeing. If the Glasgow people want me let us try to fit it in. I am writing to Glazier by this post.

As to the march of affairs the London strikes far outweigh in importance the T.U. Congress. Of course we all know how conservative British workmen are: and I think the attack on Broadhurst went on wrong lines; he should have been attacked for his opinions and the actions resulting from them: I mean as being an obstructive and a Whig.

Thank you, I will accept with pleasure your invitation to come to your house. It is kind of you to keep me out of the hands of the Philistines. I hope however it will not inconvenience Mrs. Glasse.

Excuse haste. I am going out of town for a week and am much cluttered up with business.

Yours ever,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

There follow on this two short notes and the two postcards (October 3, 11, 12, 16) all dealing with this visit to Edinburgh, where he stayed with Glasse, to whom he writes a month later:

November 21, 1889.

My dear Glasse,

I am sending you a large paper copy of my new book (which I hope will not lumber your shelves too much) as a memento of the jolly week we had together.

I have been on the stump since at Liverpool, Chesterfield and Sheffield; and it seems to me as if the provinces were on the move; at Sheffield especially I had a large and enthusiastic audience. This is good since the movement cannot entirely live on London. Here I must say I think we are rather in an eddy, but I don't think it will last long.

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Wishing you luck all round, and plenty of encouraging work for the cause, and with kindest regards to Mrs. Glasse.

I am,

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

It is clear from the recollections of May Morris (as also from these letters) that Morris enjoyed staying at 16 Tantallon Place, with the Glasse family. Dr. Glasse himself had a fine voice and liked to sing old Scottish songs and ballads, not unexpectedly from one born in Auchtermuchty in 'the kingdom of Fife'. My Edinburgh correspondent, Mr. H. A. Scott, has given me some further recollections about him, notably a meeting addressed by Hilaire Belloc on 'The Socialist State' where Glasse from the chair 'disassociated himself with some of Belloc's remarks'.

In a short letter to Glasse* written on February 17, 1890, Morris opens with some minor arrangements and concludes:

I will get the last Christian Socialist and read your article, I am sure with pleasure.

Thank you for the good word about News from Nowhere: and also, and specially, for that about the Roots: it gave me great pleasure to write it. I am glad you managed to shake off your blackguard, and that you are getting on well: please do what you can, you good folk to push the Weal, we are in low water as to funds. I shall print the News from Nowhere in a book from 1s. or perhaps 6d.

Again thanks and best wishes.

Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM MORRIS.

Morris had by this time been thrust out of the Editorship of *Commonweal* by the anarchist section who made a dead set to capture the Socialist League—as, twenty years earlier they had attempted, but with less success, to capture the First International. No longer Editor, he contributed *News from Nowhere* serially until

*Glasse's later writings included 'John Knox, a criticism' (1905) and a couple of other books published after his death in 1918. His earlier writings included 'Pauperism in Scotland, past and present'; 'Robert Owen and his life work'; 'Modern Christian Socialism'; 'The Relation of the Church to Socialism'. Many of his writings are as yet unpublished.

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the next November when he resigned from the League. *The Roots of the Mountains* Morris regarded as the best of his prose romances, written in the last ten years of his life. Disdainfully regarded by modern critics of all schools, they are yet, including *The Dream of John Ball*, gems of literature and may one day be so acknowledged.

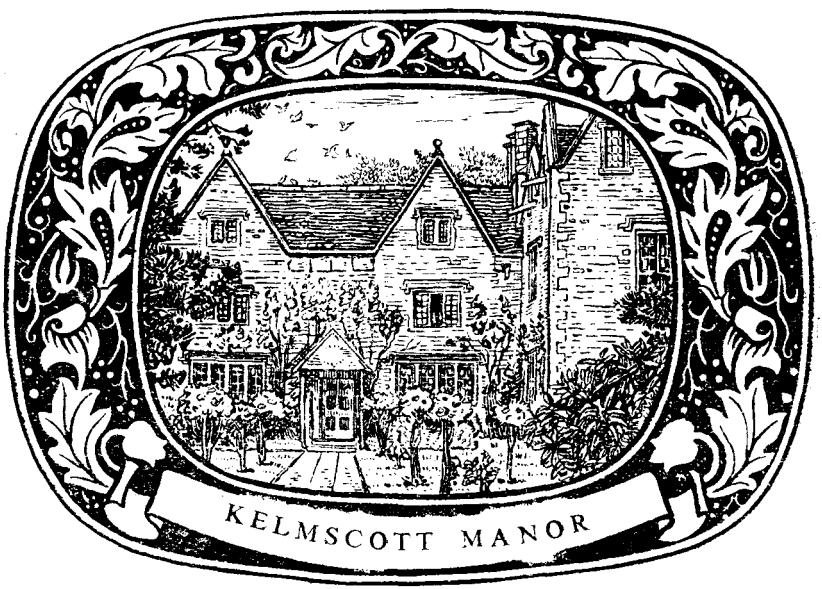
Morris in November, 1890, founded the Hammersmith Socialist Society. But within a few months he suffered a serious illness (gout) after which his health was never so good again. By 1895 diabetes had developed and thereafter for eighteen months he was slowly dying. There was no insulin then. In the end came the tuberculosis of which he died. His last long illness was already upon him (though he continued to do each day the work of several men) when he sent this note, on March 11, 1895:

My dear Glasse,

I shall be very pleased to see you on Wednesday: only I may have to go to the Socialist Supper Club to dinner, as I have been remiss in attendance of late. In that case I propose to take you with me as a guest, as they will be very glad to see you. In case, come not later than, say, 6 p.m. and then if you don't like to go, we will stay at home.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM MORRIS.



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RUMANIA'S NATIONAL QUESTION SOLVED

VASILE LUCA

(Secretary of the Rumanian Workers' Party, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers.)

I HAVE pleasure in writing for the readers of the *Labour Monthly* on problems of the National Question in Rumania since our experience may be of interest to the British people.

Through its own experience, the Rumanian people, too, has fully verified the correctness of the great thesis of Marxism that 'a people which oppresses other peoples can never be free'.

National chauvinism whipped up by the ruling class against the non-Rumanian nationalities, as well as the policy of oppressing the national minorities carried out by all the bourgeois-landlord parties and governments of Rumania until the downfall of the régime of plunder and exploitation, caused our working class, peasantry and, generally, the masses of our people, nothing but suffering, increased exploitation, imperialist serfdom and a criminal war, in which our country, too, was involved by its rulers who were in the service of Hitlerite Germany.

Bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism, fanned by the ruling class, was aimed at driving a wedge between the working class and the masses of the people, at preventing their uniting irrespective of nationality—in the struggle against capitalist-landlord exploitation. In spite of existing contradictions based on interests both economic (competition) and national, the Rumanian and Hungarian bourgeoisie as well as that of other nationalities found a common language and enjoyed the entire support of the State in the exploitation of the working people in town and countryside, irrespective of the nationality of the exploited.

The policy of national oppression carried out by the Rumanian bourgeoisie and landlords, as well as their sway over other foreign territories, put in jeopardy even the unity and integrity of the Rumanian State and led to unfriendly relations with neighbouring countries. Rumania's neighbour countries, which also numbered national minorities among their inhabitants, were ruled—apart from the U.S.S.R.—by bourgeois-landlord reactionary régimes carrying out a policy of national oppression. Not only did these

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countries, like our own country, isolate themselves from their great and powerful neighbour—the Soviet Union—but they also carried out a policy of enmity towards that country, the only country able to assist—without any hidden aim of exploitation—in developing the peoples of these countries as free and independent nations.

This is how these countries became toys in the hands of foreign imperialists who subjugated them economically as well as politically, until they ended up in being used as cannon-fodder by Hitlerite Germany.

The national minorities were subjected to cruel national oppression by all bourgeois-landlord governments. The non-Rumanian nationalities were not allowed to use their mother-tongue in dealings with the State apparatus; on the pretext of lacking knowledge of the Rumanian language, many thousands of employees of various institutions were deprived of their jobs, falling a prey to unemployment.

In text-books and by means of the press, literature, theatre and church, the non-Rumanian nationalities were mocked at and insulted, whilst the Rumanian population was incited to national enmity and hatred against their fellow-citizens belonging to other nationalities.

Under the law on entertainment tax, issued in 1926, shows performed in non-Rumanian languages were subjected to a tax three times as high as the tax payable for plays performed in Rumanian. Firms or artisan shops owned by a person belonging to a 'minority' had their taxes doubled and trebled. At high-schools and universities the 'numerus clausus' or 'numerus Valachicus' or 'numerus nullus' were practised, preventing the access of the national minorities to these schools and colleges. The old bourgeois-landlord State tolerated the existence of elementary and secondary schools with tuition in Hungarian and German, but these were religious schools in no way supported by the State.

After the coming to power of the fascist-Antonescu régime and Rumania's joining the criminal war against the U.S.S.R. as a vassal of Hitlerite Germany, Jews and Gypsies were herded into labour battalions and deported; tens of thousands of them were massacred both in German camps and whilst still in Rumania.

Notwithstanding the fact that the anti-democratic policy of national oppression and of subservience to the interests of foreign imperialism carried out by the bourgeois-landlord and Right-wing

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social-democratic parties, had brought the country to the verge of catastrophe, these parties tried—even after the military and moral-political defeat of fascism—to resurrect the old reactionary Rumania with the help of Anglo-American imperialism in whose service they were.

Using the remnants of fascist-nationalist organisations and unleashing chauvinistic pogroms against the non-Rumanian nationalities, the reactionary parties, who aimed at maintaining the régime of exploitation and oppression and their class domination, tried to continue to foment discord among the working people and to turn the country again into a bridgehead for a future anti-Soviet war—at this juncture under the leadership of Anglo-American imperialism.

This time, however, the wave of chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism was defeated by the internationalism of the working class led by the Rumanian Communist Party. True to its Marxist-Leninist tradition in the national problem and guided by the teachings of Comrade Stalin, the Rumanian Communist Party resolutely and uncompromisingly rose against the fresh wave of chauvinism provoked by the Rumanian as well as foreign bourgeoisie and landlords of our country. The Party, basing itself on peaceful and friendly relations between all nationalities in Rumania, succeeded in rallying around vital problems all those exploited and oppressed, uniting them in the common struggle for the consolidation of the national independence won with the help of the liberating Soviet Army, in the common struggle for strengthening our national integrity.

The Rumanian Communist Party rallied all working people in the fight for the liquidation of feudal survivals which hindered the economic and social development of our country, in the fight for setting up people's democratic power, for strengthening friendship and economic, political and cultural co-operation with the neighbour countries and, in the first place, with the U.S.S.R.; our country thus took its place in the great struggle waged by the peace and freedom-loving peoples for the moral-political liquidation of fascism, for a lasting peace, democracy and Socialism.

Forming the Rumanian Workers' Party, the working class of our country, under the leadership of the Rumanian Communist Party, restored its moral-political unity and—with the working peasantry as its ally—smashed bourgeois-landlord reaction, set up people's

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democratic power and solved Rumania's national problem in the Marxist-Leninist spirit.

Rumanian, Hungarian, Jewish, Ukrainian and other workers enjoying equal rights, own the factories, plants, mines, transport industry, etc., and are building the new classless society—a society without national oppression. Helped by the working class, the Rumanian, Hungarian, and other peasants have become the owners of the soil they till. Under the Agrarian Reform Law of 1945, the big landowners, irrespective of nationality, were expropriated and the ownership of the land confiscated from them was transferred to working peasants of various nationalities.

The non-Rumanian nationalities are at liberty to use their native language in their dealings with any State authority whatsoever. Working people belonging to these nationalities, as well as men and women active in the field of culture, art, science and literature, participate without any discrimination in the political, economic and cultural life of our country; they have their representatives in the administrative bodies of villages, towns and Regions; they are elected deputies to the local People's Councils, the Grand National Assembly and the Presidium of the latter, and they are represented in the Government of our country.

In our People's Republic there are today schools of all categories where tuition is taking place in the languages of the non-Rumanian nationalities. These schools are granted the full support of our State. The non-Rumanian nationalities enjoy freedom of the press in their native languages; they issue numerous newspapers, magazines, and have at their disposal theatres, Houses of Culture, libraries, etc.

A few figures may serve to mirror the great achievements attained up till now on the road towards the Marxist-Leninist solution of the national problem in our Republic. During the 1950-51 school year, there were functioning in Rumania 3,530 schools of all categories, at which tuition took place in the languages of non-Rumanian nationalities, as follows: 2,559 schools in Hungarian, 548 in German, 37 in Russian, 139 in Ukrainian, 13 in Bulgarian, 69 in Serbian, 32 in Slovakian, eight in Polish, eight in Czech, nine in Croatian, ten in the Jewish, 23 in the Turkish, 64 in the Tartar and seven in the Greek languages.

A University with 11 faculties, a Medical-Pharmaceutical Institute with five faculties, and an Agronomical Institute with one faculty have been established for the Hungarian population—the biggest

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non-Rumanian nationality in our country. Since the educational reform, there have been printed text-books in 13 languages, reaching a number of 2,369,100 copies. In 1950 the number of Houses of Culture belonging to non-Rumanian nationalities rose to 1,583. Today there exist in the Rumanian People's Republic a Hungarian State Opera and four Hungarian State Theatres, and two State Theatres which perform in the Jewish language. The press and literary works printed in the languages of the non-Rumanian nationalities enjoy a big circulation. Forty-five newspapers, periodicals and magazines published in seven languages are meeting the requirements of these nationalities as regards their information and guidance. Between August 23, 1944, and June 30, 1951, Rumania's chief publishing houses issued in the languages of the non-Rumanian nationalities a number of 3,246 books and booklets in 18,152,955 copies.

As far back as 1949, nine of the active members of the Academy of the R.P.R. belonged to non-Rumanian nationalities. In 1949 the scientific institutes of the R.P.R. Academy numbered among their permanent scientific collaborators 59 Hungarian, Jewish, Polish, German, Bulgarian, Turkish and Tartar scientists and scientific workers, as well as a large number of research and other specialised staff. In 1950 the Rumanian Writers' Union included among its members 108 writers belonging to non-Rumanian nationalities. The Rumanian Broadcasting Committee daily transmits four Hungarian-language programmes, three programmes in the German and Serbian languages respectively, and, once a week, a programme in the Jewish language.

The non-Rumanian nationalities are represented in the supreme organ of State power, in the State-administrative bodies, in the judiciary, in the armed forces, etc. Thus the number of deputies of non-Rumanian nationalities elected to the People's Councils on December 3, 1950, exceeded 13,000, or 12% of the total. There are more than 6,000 People's Assessors elected from among the ranks of the non-Rumanian nationalities. The rights of the non-Rumanian nationalities in the new Rumania are guaranteed by the Constitution of the R.P.R., the material basis of these rights being ensured by people's democratic power.

In plants and factories, in mines and on the fields, in the new collective farms and co-operatives, in the cultural sphere—everywhere the working people of the Rumanian People's Republic are speaking and singing in many languages. Resolutely advancing to

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the common goal on the glorious path mapped out by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, they are building Socialism in the R.P.R. Instead of the former chauvinistic and nationalist strife and clashes, the toiling masses in town and countryside are engaged in Socialist competition for the fulfilment of our Five-Year Plan, for the raising of the economic power of our Republic and of the economic and cultural level of the working people.

Under the leadership of the working class, the Rumanian people and the non-Rumanian nationalities of the R.P.R. have joined the family of those nations which have set out on the road shown by the great Stalin—the road of transformation from bourgeois nations based on chauvinistic, nationalist ideology, into socialist nations based on the lofty ideology of internationalism and brotherhood among peoples.

30th Anniversary Messages of Greeting

African General Workers' Union, Pretoria (Stephen S. Tefu, Chairman; N. H. Nyadice-Mokgatle, Secretary), writes:—

We say on behalf of our Executive Committee, and the organisation as a whole, that it is through your devotion, and able editorship, that the *Labour Monthly* succeeded in carrying its encouraging message and teachings to countless millions in the colonial countries.

Since our reading of the *Labour Monthly*, we have found it educative and instructive. Through its pages, we have learned, and now we know how the class struggle has been going on in Britain, since the first issue of the *Labour Monthly* appeared.

From 'Le Drapeau Rouge' (Pierre Joye, Editor-in-Chief)

Carrying on the struggle in a neighbouring country where the situation of the working class and the conditions of the struggle bear a great similarity to those in Great Britain, we in Belgium are well placed to appreciate at its true worth the thirty-years effort of *Labour Monthly*. We take this opportunity to express our warm brotherly greetings and to wish you all success in the struggle you wage for Socialism and peace.

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THE MINDS OF THE RULING CLASS

The Life of J. M. Keynes, by R. F. Harrod (674 pp. Macmillan and Co. 25*s*).

THIS copious biography makes interesting reading. Written by an admiring disciple, who follows the development of his master from his school days to his grave with meticulous precision, it gives a revealing illustration of how the minds of the ruling class are trained and how they work.

Here is, in fact, a problem to which only Marxism gives the key. Distinguished by a brilliant critical intellect, wide erudition and manifold interests, living in the age of the greatest change of history, witnessing the final crisis of capitalism and the great achievements of the rising Socialist society, the famous economist never questioned the fundamental dogmas of the traditional apologetic theory. Keeping himself in studied ignorance of the revolutionary critique of capitalism, of Marxism, he professed to have found the cure to all evils of capitalism by a little bit of state intervention and monetary manipulation. How else can such wilful blindness be explained than by the blinkers of class prejudice, firmly fixed in the public school and kept in position by the honours and amenities the ruling class offers to their intellectual representatives even if they occasionally kick against the traces? When 18, Keynes was elected to 'Pop', the Eton Society. Harrod comments: 'These young men govern the school for the time—as they expect, many of them, or used to expect, to govern the country later. They are in fact our born leaders, people of substance and character, men of the world'. These young men, in perfect isolation from the common people, are taught to take a sporting interest in political discussion. Young Maynard writes to a friend:

> 'I have been waxing quite political lately—a most amusing game, and a very fairly adequate substitute for bridge'.

Even if this adolescent cynicism is not taken too seriously, the idea of serving the people obviously does not enter the minds of these select few. In later years Keynes professed deep contempt for politicians, he found them 'awful', of 'inhuman stupidity'. (Letter of 3.10.1911.) He knew the Liberals for whom he took the platform—his judgment of the top leaders was not much kinder when he watched them at close quarters at the Versailles Conference —but he served this type of politician to the end of his life.

Harrod regards Keynes' work at the Treasury in the First World War as the height of his career. Although his main theoretical work was conceived and written two decades later, it seems that his critical faculties were at their peak when he saw through the imbecility of the rulers of the world and, resigning from his office, publicly denounced their fatal treaty making. This is also the only occasion when he betrayed an inkling of understanding for the revolutionary epoch in which we are living. At Christmas, 1917, he wrote to his mother:

> 'A further prolongation of the war . . . probably means the disappearance of the social order we have known hitherto. With some regrets I think I am on the whole not sorry. The abolition of the rich will be rather a comfort and serve them right anyhow . . . In another year's time . . . this country will be mortgaged to America. Well the only course open to me is to be buoyantly bolshevik; and as I lie in bed in the morning I reflect with a good deal of satisfaction that, because our rulers are as incompetent as they are mad and wicked,

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one particular era of a particular kind of civilisation is very nearly over'.

It seems as if for a moment the thunderbolt of the October Revolution had shattered the Eton and Cambridge blinkers. But for a moment only, it was not enough to induce the learned economist to study what was going on in the first Socialist country. When after his marriage with the Russian dancer, Lopokova, he visited Soviet Russia, he found there 'nothing of economic interest'. (page 365.) The same wilful blindness he maintained to the theory of Marxism. His pupils were advised to study Marshall, Pigou and *The Times*. When in a controversy the Oxford list of prescribed text-books was mentioned—Smith, Ricardo, List, Jevons and Marx—he granted that there was a case for studying the master minds of the past, Smith and Ricardo. 'Marx might certainly be discarded'. (p.327.) When Keynes was grappling with the problem of crisis and unemployment, G. B. Shaw advised him to study Marx. This was Keynes' reaction:

> 'I've made another shot at old K.M. last week, reading the Marx-Engels correspondence . . . I prefer Engels of the two. I can see that they invented a certain method of carrying on and a vile manner of writing, both of which their successors have maintained with fidelity. But if you tell me that they discovered a clue to the economic riddle, still I am beaten—I can discover nothing but out-of-date controversialising . . . I believe myself to be writing a book on economic theory which will largely revolutionise . . . the way the world thinks about economic problems . . . the Ricardian foundations of Marxism will be knocked away'. (letter of 1.1.1935, p.462.)

So it was the old game of bourgeois economists to refute what they never have studied and understood. In later years Keynes proved his sagacity as a political economist when he staked all his hopes for a prosperous post-war world on Anglo-American co-operation, praised American 'magnanimity' and, after negotiating the American loan, calmly predicted that there would be no problem of dollar shortage. Harrod suggests that disappointment at the commandeering and implacable attitude of Justice Vinson, the Secretary of the Treasury, who frustrated Keynes' plan of a manipulated world currency, and the excitement and strain of the protracted negotiations with the Americans hastened Keynes' death.

So he served to the end the suicidal policies of a ruling class whose wickedness and stupidity he had denounced and he helped to mortgage his country to America, a fate against which he had warned 28 years earlier.

J. WINTERNITZ.

DIMITROV THE HERO

Selected speeches and articles by Georgi Dimitrov. Introduction by Harry Pollitt. (276 pp. Lawrence and Wishart. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

THE book contains the world-famous speech at the Reichstag trial and the one on his arrival in Moscow; his Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and reply to discussion; three articles on the struggle for peace; and his

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report to the fifth congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Each of these items, dealing with important events, mainly in the vital years of struggle against fascism, provides material for Marxist study that can help enormously in facing the problems of today.

Take, for example, the Report of the Seventh World Congress. In it Dimitrov makes a classic presentation of the problems of the united front and mass struggle. This gives a guiding line to the major tactical question of the present time, the forging of unity in the fight for peace. How concisely and clearly he deals with this question can be seen in the following extract (p. 63):

> 'What is and ought to be the basic content of the united front at the present stage? The defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defence of the working class against fascism, must form the starting point and main content of the united front in capitalist countries'.

Today some pose the question of the building of the Party as against the fight for unity. Again Dimitrov puts the answer simply:

> 'If we Communists exert every effort to establish a united front, we do this not for the narrow purpose of recruiting new members for the Communist Parties. But we must strengthen the Communist Parties in every way, and increase their membership for the very reason that we seriously want to strengthen the united front. The strengthening of the Communist Parties is not a narrow party concern, but the concern of the entire working class'.

His report to the Bulgarian Party congress illumines some vital basic questions, especially a theoretical explanation of the political meaning of People's Democracy and its role in building socialism.

But the highlights of the book for me are the final speech in the Reichstag trial and the splendid introduction by Harry Pollitt. These tell the story of the life and struggle of one of our greatest communist heroes. What an inspiration to all of us, young and old, to read again the words of defiance and confidence, spoken from a Nazi dock, after months of torture and chains, hourly staring a fearful death in the face. He did not merely defend his communist faith (and that he did magnificently). He turned the whole trial into an accusation and exposure of fascism. How prophetic were his words:

> 'A time will come when these accounts will have to be settled, with interest'. [Ghosts of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels!]
>
> 'The wheel of history moves on towards the ultimate, inevitable goal of Communism . . .' *The Court forbade Dimitrov to speak further.*

But he spoke and worked again in Moscow, in Bulgaria. What a man! What a hero! What a Communist!

This is definitely a book to buy, to study, to treasure.

ISABEL BROWN.

We regret to record the sudden death of James Gray, an old friend and supporter of the magazine (to whose fund he made generous donation only so recently as our 30th Anniversary), while on holiday in South Wales last month.

Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134 Ballards Lane, London, N.3, and printed by Dorchester and District Newspapers, Ltd. (T.U.), Dorchester, Great Britain. Registered for transmission by Magazine Post to Canada, including Newfoundland.

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look to each reader, including those who can and will continue to buy it because they need it more than ever, to take personal responsibility for maintaining and extending the readership, and seeing that everyone who needs it reads it, even in the face of severe hardship. You want to do something about it? One or two suggestions. A literature secretary from Yorkshire writes that things won't be easy, but 'we *must* hold the readership. I am going to suggest to any who feel at first that they can't keep it up that two or even three share a copy between them. If we tackle it in that way to begin with, surely the circulation can be held and even increased. Because it is more indispensable than ever.' There will be old age pensioners, servicemen and others whom neither you nor I know of, whom you can help with only a small effort. Go *today* to your Public Library—is it on display there for their benefit? Share your enthusiasm with these unknown, unseen readers and help them to their copy in that way. People with imagination do think of them: in the grief of a bereavement a widow wrote to tell us that one old reader would never again see his subscription copy; the balance of that subscription has been made over to an old age pensioner. It takes thought, imagination and organisation; I hope readers will pass on their schemes for the benefit of others. The bigger the difficulty the bigger the challenge to human resource and initiative: that fund is unfailing.

Thanks to birthday presents, the splendid July donations figure reached

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Our thanks to you all.

ANGELA TUCKETT.

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